

of 2013, would improve the most efficient, most effective retirement program we have—Social Security—in three ways. First, it would increase benefits by about \$65 per month for all beneficiaries. Second, it would ensure that annual cost of living adjustments more accurately reflect the cost of living experienced by seniors by adopting the CPI-E. And, finally, it would remove the wage cap so that the payroll tax applies fairly to every dollar of wages. According to the Social Security actuaries, my proposal would increase benefits for current and future beneficiaries while also extending the life of the Social Security Trust Fund through 2049.

Recently, an organization that I have worked closely with for many years, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare, launched a campaign in support of a proposal that would boost Social Security benefits, including my legislation. I deeply appreciate the support of the national committee, and commend them for their work to strengthen and expand Social Security. I look forward to continuing to work with them, and other supportive organizations, to confront our Nation's retirement crisis. Strengthening and expanding Social Security is the crucial first step.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN CHINA

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I would like to draw attention to a disturbing trend impacting the work of journalists in China.

On January 30, 2014, New York Times reporter Austin Ramzy was forced to leave China due to processing delays for his press credentials. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated event. In 2013, Reporters Without Borders ranked China 173rd out of 179 countries in terms of press freedoms. Over the past year, we have seen China increase efforts to curb the work of foreign news organizations, including extended delays in processing journalist visas, restrictions on access to "sensitive" locations and individuals, pressure on local staff, blocked Web sites, and reports of cyber hacking of media organizations.

To call attention to this suppression, I, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, along with subcommittee ranking member MARCO RUBIO, Senate Foreign Relations chairman BOB MENENDEZ, and ranking member BOB CORKER, introduced S. Res. 361. This resolution urges the People's Republic of China to take meaningful steps to improve freedom of expression in China as fitting of a responsible international stakeholder.

The ongoing crackdown on journalists and members of the press reporting in China is of grave concern to me. A country that engages in routine censorship and online blocking; harassment, reprisals, and detention of jour-

nalists; and visa delays or denials for journalists not only fails its own people but also fails the international community. A vibrant and free press instills trust in one's government, creates a more transparent environment for business investments, develops an engaged community, and builds legitimacy as a secure, global leader. We expect our partners to strive for these standards.

As we look to rebalance our policy toward the Asia-Pacific region, the United States has a responsibility to promote respect for universal human rights. We urge President Obama to use all appropriate tools to improve and promote freedom of the press in China.

I would like to thank my colleagues for joining me in support of press freedom in China.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. MOHAMMAD YOUSAF

• Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I wish to recognize one of West Virginia's finest cardiologists, Dr. Mohammad Yousaf, on receiving the 2013 Heart of Gold Award, which was presented by the West Virginia American Heart Association on February 23, 2013. There is truly no one more qualified, more compassionate or more devoted than Dr. Yousaf, who has been practicing in West Virginia for more than 20 years.

A native of Pakistan, Dr. Yousaf made his way to West Virginia to complete his residency at Marshall University. During his fellowship, he was assigned rotations in our beautiful State's capital, Charleston. Thankfully, he never left and his unwavering commitment to the cardiology field at South Charleston Cardiology, where he continues to practice today, has consistently saved West Virginian lives across our State.

With the help of Dr. Yousaf's momentous contributions and medical expertise, the quality of West Virginia's medical community has strengthened throughout the years and the health and well-being of the people of West Virginia continue to improve.

There are a myriad of doctors across this Nation that diagnose and treat patients every day. However, what distinguishes a good doctor from a great doctor starts and stops with patient care. Dr. Yousaf always puts his patients first and takes the time to build the trust and confidence necessary that leads to positive and long-lasting doctor-patient relationships. Long days and sleepless nights never obstruct from the compassion and dedication Dr. Yousaf devotes to each one of his patients.

Dr. Yousaf is also no stranger to prestigious awards, including the Distinguished West Virginian award, which was created to honor those who have contributed significantly to West

Virginia and those who have brought positive attention to our great State. After more than two decades practicing as a cardiologist in the Mountain State, it is unquestionable that his integrity and work ethic know no bounds. And today, I am proud to commemorate the success of such a wonderful person and such a talented physician.

It is fitting that Dr. Yousaf was presented with the Heart of Gold Award last year, for he once described "the personal satisfaction you get" as a physician who has the means and opportunities to save lives every day. So today, I congratulate a remarkably intelligent and gifted cardiologist on receiving such an esteemed honor. I know he will continue to save lives in the great state of West Virginia for years to come.●

REMEMBERING MICHAEL A. STEPOVICH

• Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I wish to give tribute to Alaska's last Territorial Governor, Michael A. Stepovich, who unfortunately died early on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, at the age of 94.

Mr. Stepovich was a war veteran, a legislator, a local government leader, the first Governor of the Territory born in Alaska and the last prior to statehood in 1957 and 1958, a lawyer, a civic leader, businessman and a true statesman. He also was a good man, and great friend to my entire family. When my family moved to Fairbanks, AK in the early 1970s, Mike and his wife Mathilda and their children were our earliest and closest friends. The Stepovichs raised a large and loving family, and while most Alaskans will remember Mike as an Alaskan statesman, I will always think of him first as a true family man.

Michael was born in Fairbanks on March 12, 1919, the son of Michael A. and Olga S. Stepovich. He graduated in 1940 from Gonzaga University—which in 1966 honored him with the DeSmet medal for being an "outstanding graduate and layman." He earned a law degree from Notre Dame in 1943, and after service in the Navy, he completed postgraduate work at Santa Clara College in 1946.

Stepovich opened a private law practice in Fairbanks in 1948, serving as the city attorney of Fairbanks from 1950 to 1952, as a delegate to the Territorial House of Representatives from 1951–1953 and in the Territorial Senate from 1953–1957. While in the Senate he served as minority leader and was a strong supporter of statehood. He worked tirelessly on the 1956 referendum for statehood. President Dwight Eisenhower appointed Stepovich to be Territorial Governor after Alaskans went to the ballot box in support of joining the Union. He was to be Alaska's last Territorial Governor—within a year Congress would approve Alaska as the 49th State.